

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15

NSC-05 PM-03 /058 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:MHVAN ORDER  
APPROVED BY NEA/P:MHVAN ORDER  
S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)  
H - MISS FOLGER (INFO)  
EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

----- 033819

O 022210Z JUL 75  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY  
USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE  
SECDEF

UNCLAS STATE 156597

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING -- DISAPPEARANCE OF  
COLONEL MORGAN IN BEIRUT

CINCEUR FOR POLAD  
SECDEF FOR OSD/PA

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS  
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING JULY 2, 1975:

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ABOUT AN AMERICAN COLONEL MISSING  
IN LEBANON?

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Q. MISSING WHERE?

A. THE QUESTION WAS, DO WE HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON A REPORT-  
ED MISSING U.S. ARMY COLONEL IN LEBANON.

OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT HAS REPORTED THE POSSIBLE ABDUCTION JUNE 29 OF COLONEL ERNEST R. MORGAN, U.S. ARMY, IN THAT CITY. COLONEL MORGAN WAS RETURNING FROM A CENTO EXERCISE IN PAKISTAN TO HIS POST IN ANKARA. DURING A TRANSIT STOP IN BEIRUT, HE WAS REPORTEDLY SEIZED FROM A TAXI BY ARMED MEN AT ONE OF THE MANY ROADBLOCKS IN THAT CITY. OUR

EMBASSY IMMEDIATELY INFORMED THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO ASCERTAIN COLONEL MORGAN'S WHEREABOUTS.

Q. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON WHERE THIS ROADBLOCK WAS? WAS THIS ON THE WAY FROM THE AIRPORT TO A HOTEL, OR HAD HE WANDERED OFF INTO --

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS ACTUALLY IN THE CITY STAYING AT A HOTEL -- I DON'T KNOW WHICH HOTEL -- AND HE HAD GOTTEN INTO A TAXI AT HIS HOTEL.

Q. BUT WHERE WAS HE GOING? I MEAN WAS HE GOING OFF INTO ANOTHER AREA -- OF

A. WE JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q. WAS THERE ANYONE ACCOMPANYING HIM?

A. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, HE WAS ALONE.

Q. ANY INDICATION OF WHICH ROADBLOCK THIS WAS OR WHO WAS MANNING THE ROADBLOCK?

Q. WAS HE IN UNIFORM?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY REPORTEDLY A POSSIBLE ABDUCTION, IS OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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INFORMATION FROM THE CAB DRIVER? I MEAN WHO IS THE SOURCE?

A. THERE WAS A WITNESS TO THE INCIDENT WHO IS THE SOURCE.

Q. WERE ANY DEMANDS MADE?

A. THERE HAS BEEN NO WORD FROM ANY ALLEGED ABDUCTORS.

Q. DID HE SPEAK ARABIC?

Q. WAS THERE A WITNESS --

A. PARDON ME?

Q. DOES HE SPEAK ARABIC?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. DO WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ALIVE?

A. WELL, WE CERTAINLY HOPE HE IS. BUT WE JUST DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION. WE HAD THIS EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT. WE IMMEDIATELY INFORMED THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES. AND WE HAVE HAD NO FURTHER WORD.

Q. WHO IS THE EYEWITNESS?

A. EXCUSE ME?

Q. WHO IS THE EYEWITNESS? WAS IT A LEBANESE? AN AMERICAN?

A. IT WASN'T AN AMERICAN. I WOULD RATHER NOT GO INTO FURTHER DETAIL ON THAT. I DON'T WANT TO IDENTIFY THE WITNESS.

Q. CAN YOU ESTABLISH WHETHER HE WAS IN UNIFORM OR NOT?

A. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE WAS IN UNIFORM OR NOT.

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Q. CAN YOU GIVE US HIS AGE, FAMILY?

A. ON THOSE KINDS OF DETAILS, YOU WILL HAVE TO ASK THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. I DON'T HAVE THEM.

Q. WHAT IS HE EXACT JOB IN ANKARA?

A. HE IS CONCERNED WITH CENTO.

Q. DO WE ATTACH ANY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS ACT?

A. I HAVE NO REASON TO ATTACH ANY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO IT.

Q. HE WAS GOING FROM PAKISTAN TO ANKARA AND HE THOUGHT HE WOULD STOP OVER IN BEIRUT?

A. YES.

Q. TO SIGHTSEE?

A. PRESUMABLY, YES. IT WASN'T IN OFFICIAL CONNECTION

WITH HIS --

Q. BUT HE HAD A HOTEL RESERVATION AND ALL SO IT WAS KNOWN THAT HE WAS GOING TO STAY?

A. I DON'T THINK OUR EMBASSY KNEW THAT HE WAS MAKING A TRANSIT STOP. HE WAS JUST DOING THIS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT,

ON PERSONAL --

Q. "TRANSIT" IS WHAT THREW ME. IT IS SORT OF GOVERNMENT TERMINOLOGY MEANING HE WAS ON HIS WAY. IT WASN'T A CONNECTION OR SOMETHING, WAS IT?

A. HE STOPPED OVER IN BEIRUT AND HE WENT INTO THE CITY, AS I UNDERSTAND IT. BUT I JUST REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY MORE DETAILS THAN THIS.

Q. YOU DON'T HAVE THE DETAILS OF THE QUESTIONS I HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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ASKED YOU, OR YOU ARE JUST BUREAUCRATICALLY PUSHING US TOWARDS THE PENTAGON?

A. I DON'T HAVE THEM. IF I HAD THE, I WOULD GIVE THEM TO YOU.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE CENTO EXERCISE ENDED?

A. NO, I DON'T HAVE THAT.

Q. HOW LONG HAS HE SERVED IN ANKARA?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THOSE DETAILS WITH ME. I JUST GOT THIS BEFORE I CAME IN.

Q. DO YOU KNOW IF THE WITNESS GOT IN TOUCH FIRST WITH THE LEBANESE OR FIRST WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY?

A. I DON'T KNOW THAT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW AT WHAT LEVEL WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT?

A. I DON'T KNOW THE LEVEL, BUT I AM CONFIDENT IT IS AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL. THERE ISN'T ANY INDICATION THAT IT WASN'T. I AM SURE THAT EVEN WITH THE DIFFICULTIES THERE HAVE BEEN IN LEBANON WHICH WOULD COMPLICATE TRYING TO FIND HIM, I AM SURE THAT PEOPLE ARE DOING THEIR BEST.

Q. DID YOU SAY WHAT HIS POST IS IN ANKARA?

A. NO. ALL I KNOW IS HE IS WORKING WITH CENTO. BUT I DON'T HAVE THAT INFORMATION.

Q. CAN WE GO BACK TO THIS A MINUTE? HAS HE EVER BEEN IN BEIRUT, IN LEBANON BEFORE, AS FAR AS YOU KNOW?

A. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q. IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM LIKE AN APPROPRIATE PLACE TO STOP OFF ON A TRIP OF THAT LENGTH, UNLESS HE HAD SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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BUSINESS THERE. DID HE HAVE BUSINESS IN LEBANON?

A. NO. I AM TOLD HE WAS MAKING A TRANSIT STOP IN BEIRUT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HIS SPECIALTY WAS? WAS HE INFANTRY, ARMORED, ARTILLERY, CIA -- ANYTHING?

A. NOT CIA. HE IS A COLONEL IN THE U.S. ARMY.

Q. WELL, I KNOW.

A. IF I HAD HAD TIME, I WOULD HAVE CALLED DEFENSE, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO DELAY OUR BRIEFING FURTHER.

Q. I DIDN'T GET CLEAR HOW LONG HE HAD BEEN IN ANKARA (SIC) YOU SAID HE HAD A HOTEL THERE. HAD HE SPENT A NIGHT THERE? OR HAD HE JUST CHECKED IN?

A. ALL I WAS TOLD IS THAT HE WAS AT A HOTEL, HE WAS LEAVING THE HOTEL, HE WAS GETTING INTO A TAXICAB, AND THEN AFTER HE GOT INTO THAT TAXICAB, HE WAS SEIZED OR PULLED OUT OF THIS TAXICAB AT ONE OF THE ROADBLOCKS IN THE CITY.

Q. IS THIS WITH HIS LUGGAGE? WAS HE ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE AIRPORT?

A. I WILL JUST HAVE TO TRY TO GET MORE INFORMATION FOR YOU AFTERWARDS. INGERSOLL

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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